Press Release

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STATEMENT by

H.E. Mr. Ri Tong II,
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to the United Nations at the general debate, Final United Nations Conference on
the Arms Trade Treaty
(18th March, 2013)

Mr. President,

Allow me first of all congratulate you for your election to the presidency of this Conference and
express hope for its success under your able chairmanship.

At the same time, I would like to assure you of the active cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. President,

The current ATT Conference being held in succession to the Conference of last year is open to
our regret with the divergent views still being there with regard to the core articles of the future
treaty and this is casting a dark shadow on the prospects of this Conference.

The decisive element for success of this conference will be largely dependent on how far
delagations represented here are ready to cooperate with each other, respect interests of others
and thereby narrow down differences.

The failure of last year’s Conference is basically due to lack of close cooperation between
countries and this lesson should be taken into account seriously.
The conventional weapons, together with nuclear weapons, consist of two major weapons categories today and they are being universally possessed by all the existing countries the world over, necessarily serving as a means of safeguarding security and sovereignty of each and every country, featuring very different from nuclear weapons.

In other words, whereas nuclear weapons are extremely limited to certain few countries in terms of their possession, the conventional weapons ranging from pistols to combat aircrafts, tanks and artillerys are of very sensitive nature closely linked to the security and sovereignty of all the countries attending this Conference.

Concerning the negotiation on ATT, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to clarify its principled position as follows.

First, the question of attaching priority to concluding a treaty on total elimination of nuclear weapons should be reflected in the future ATT.

With destruction power deadly incomparable to the conventional weapons, the nuclear weapons are weapons of great threats to the very existence of the mankind but it is a stark reality that the conclusion of a treaty on total elimination of them is being rejected unabated by nuclear weapons states, while instead the modernization of nuclear weapons are being pushed through in defiance of the desire of the mankind.

At the front of the modernization is the largest nuclear weapon state, who has listed certain countries as nuclear preemptive strike targets with increased nuclear blackmails.

The increased nuclear blackmails by the largest nuclear weapon state following its policy of nuclear preemptive strike has today placed one non-nuclear weapon state of yesterday on to the very proud and powerful status of nuclear weapon state and compelled it furthermore to finally adopt the same nuclear preemptive strike policy.

The continuing policy of nuclear preemptive strike by the largest nuclear weapon state make us easily predict that it will in the long run give birth to more new nuclear weapons states.

The Missile Defence System of the largest nuclear weapon state, in particular, is implying its wild ambition of achieving an absolute nuclear superiority, and therefore, it is considered to be containing an extremely dangerous element of potential nuclear arms race very similar to the cold war times and a potential for totally undermining the prospects of nuclear disarmament.
In this regard, our delegation is cognizant of the question of attaching priority to nuclear disarmament to be considered as a part in the preamble of the future ATT.

Second, the future ATT should ensure that the principle of respect for the right to self defence and the right to legitimate arms trade be respected.

Article 51 of the UN Charter stipulates that the individual and collective right to self defence is an inherent right of UN member states.

In accordance with this principle of the UN Charter, all countries should enjoy the right to legitimate arms trade and all countries should enjoy free participation in arms trade.

As far as details are concerned, the right to legitimate arms trade should be so comprehensive as to include domestic production, exports, imports and technology transfer of conventional weapons and it should not be allowed to leave it as the pure monopoly of a few countries.

As long as any attempt continues in this Conference for placing articles of political nature in the future ATT with implications of obstacles in the way of full exercise of individual countries of their right to self defence and the right to legitimate arms trade, it will only have a negative impact on the negotiation, eventually leading to undesired consequences of undermining the conference, as was the case last year.

Since there are still divergent views regarding the core articles of the future ATT, the delegation of the DPRK is of the view that, if the positions related to security interests of every country in particular are paid due attention and the security interests are reflected in a balanced manner, it will no doubt create a favorable negotiation climate.

Thank you.